



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1940

TOURISTS DISCOVER WILDLIFE PARADISE ON COASTAL ISLAND

A coastal island off the shores of South Carolina, once a haven for pirates and rum runners, has been "rediscovered" by American tourists who find it one of the most unusual wildlife sanctuaries along the Atlantic seaboard, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service reported to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes today.

Bulls Island, a part of the 60,000 acre Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge at McClellansville, South Carolina, thirty miles from Charleston, is a semi-tropical area where tourists find a surprising variety of wildlife living in a habitat of palmetto trees, holly trees, pines, huge live oaks draped with Spanish moss, and small ponds where waterfowl by the hundreds flock to rest.

Not only automobile and train tourists find the refuge easy to reach, but boatmen using the inland waterway stop there overnight to visit the unusual wildlife resort. The inland waterway borders the refuge.

Dotting the picturesque island are numerous fresh-water ponds where the waterfowl rest and feed. Colorful buffleheads, black ducks, herons, and beautiful white egrets mingle with scaups, blue-winged teals, and other birds. When humans approach, hundreds of birds take off from the water with a thunder of beating wings, circle warily, and return again, landing in "waves."

Some 100 white-tailed deer inhabit the island, while a flock of wild turkeys add to the variety of wildlife seen on the southern island. These wild gobblers were taken from the Santee Valley and are one of the few pure strains of turkeys left in that section of the country. One authority on turkeys declared that "a million dollars couldn't buy that strain today. It is as pure as the wild breed that was found here when the Huguenots landed."

Early histories of Bulls Island tell of the activities of pirates who sailed into Bulls Bay and landed on the 6-mile-long coastal refuge to divide their loot. "Treasure Island," a portion of the northern end of Bulls Island, off Jacks Creek, is a reminder of the prerevolutionary days when the Skull and Bones flew where now the Stars and Stripes are raised and lowered each day.

Patrolman William L. Hill recalls that during prohibition days "Treasure Island" was also a favorite rendezvous of rum runners. "They came into Bulls Bay from the Atlantic, swung their speed boats up Jacks Creek under cover of darkness, and waited," he said. "When the time was right, they sped across to the mainland to unload their illicit goods and make a fast getaway."

The numerous, narrow channels criss-crossing through the nearby sea island marshes made it almost impossible for authorities to apprehend the bootleggers.

Since 1932, the area has been under the administration of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The island is accessible to all tourists, officials said. Overnight guests stay at Dominick House, a headquarters building of the refuge named after Geyer D. Dominick, the former owner who resided there and whose cooperation made the Bulls Island portion of the sanctuary possible. Guests pay only for meals, which aggregate \$2.50 a day.

A long sandy beach on the eastern side is available to guests who want to take a dip in the Atlantic Ocean.

Tourists who desire to visit this unusual wildlife sanctuary should make arrangements to see Bulls Island by calling or writing to Andrew DuPre, Manager, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, McClellansville, South Carolina.